

# Police knock on doors to place new retirement plan on November ballot

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**NORTH BRUNSWICK** — Going door to door has paid off for township police.

The officers' door-knocking campaign has succeeded in getting a question about changing their retirement plan on the ballot for the November election. The officers needed to garner 1,340 petition signatures, or 10 percent of the township's registered voters, and ended up with about 600 extra, Township Clerk Nancy Troichuk said yesterday. The petitions were submitted last week.

At stake is what police officers call an improved retirement package that would encourage earlier retirements and result in a younger, more vigorous police force. Residents will be asked whether the township should switch the 63-member department from the Public Employees' Retirement System to the Police &

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Firemen's Retirement System of New Jersey.

Under the current plan, a 55-year-old police officer with 25 years of service would collect 41.6 percent of his salary during retirement. Under the proposed system, that same officer would collect 60 percent of his salary during retirement. Officers aged 60 with 30 years of service would collect 65 percent of their salary under the proposed plan, compared with the 50 percent under the current plan. The idea is to offer police and firefighters a greater incentive to

retire early, opening staff positions for younger officers.

Unknown at this point is how much the change would cost. Preliminary figures released by the state Department of Treasury show taxpayers will pay twice as much into the proposed plan as they do now. Officers' rates may triple.

State officials now are compiling exact cost projections and expect to have them ready by August or September, said Mark Ventola, president of Local 160 of the Policemen's Benevolent Association.